Media Advisory

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Comment by Professor Marci A. Hamilton on Behalf of 25 Child Advocacy Organizations

In Support of Boy Scout Survivors on Release of “Perversion Files”

Calling on All States to Eliminate the Statutes of Limitations Keeping Child Sex Abuse Victims Out of Court

The Oregon Supreme Court ordered the release of the Boy Scouts’ “perversion files” in Jack Does I-VI vs. Corp. of the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Latter Day Saints, Corp. of the President of the Church of Latter Day Saints and Successors & The Boy Scouts of America, et. al (Or. June 14, 2012), available at http://media.oregonlive.com/portland_impact/other/S058601%5B1%5D.pdf. These files establish that the Boy Scouts knew about predators, but instead of protecting children by going to the authorities, they kept their identities secret and let them abuse more children.

Marci Hamilton, one of the nation’s leading experts on child sex abuse in institutional settings, states, “The Boy Scout files, like the Philadelphia Grand Jury Reports on abuse in the Philadelphia Archdiocese and the grand jury report on abuse by Jerry Sandusky, document how yet another institution has covered up child sex abuse. They kept records and knew more than anyone else in the country about the recidivism of abusers, yet, they did not go to the authorities. They enabled perpetrators and endangered one child after another. Internal records and investigations are never enough. Nor is sending the perpetrator away, with no notice to the authorities and the next community at risk.”
Sadly, the statutes of limitations for the vast majority of the Boy Scout survivors in many states likely have expired, making it difficult to prosecute or sue the perpetrators, or to bring the organization to account for endangering children. The Boy Scout’s perversion files are another stark reminder to our elected representatives that laws in many states favor the organization, aid the predator, and put children at risk.

Right now, there are untold numbers of hidden child predators who are preying on one child after another, because the statutes of limitations have been configured to give them that opportunity. It is a fact that approximately 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 5 boys are sexually abused. Thus, there is an iceberg of victims across the country, including many Boy Scout victims, who have no access to justice.

Under the current statute of limitations in many states—which halt criminal prosecution and civil cases long before most victims are ready to come forward — those who caused the abuse or created the conditions for the abuse are being given a free ride.

The Boy Scouts of America is just the latest organization whose failure to report abuse led to justice denied. Now is the time for every state to look hard at its SOLs and to give child sex abuse victims a chance at justice.”

These organizations from across the country support SOL reform for child sex abuse victims:

Elliot Pasik, Esq., President
Jewish Board of Advocates for Children, Inc.
Long Beach, NY

John Salveson, President
Foundation to Abolish Child Sex Abuse (FACSA)
Bryn Mawr, PA

Pamela Pine, PhD, MPH, Founder
Stop the Silence
Glenn Dale, MD

Linda Walker, Founder
Child Protection Project
Los Angeles, CA

Sally Berenzweig, Med, MA
Cherie Benjoseph LCSW, Cofounders
KidSafe Foundation
Coral Springs, FL

Maureen Martinez, President
Justice4pakids
Philadelphia, PA
Anne Barrett Doyle
Terence McKiernan, Co-Directors
BishopAccountability.org
Waltham, MA

Cardozo Advocates for Kids
Cardozo Law School
New York, NY

The White Tower Healing Foundation, Inc. and
Kevin T. Mulhearn, P.C.
Orangeburg, NY

Klarissa Oh, Executive Director
OAASIS: Oregon Abuse Advocates & Survivors in Service
Portland, OR

Tim Echausse, Director
LI SNAP
Long Island, NY

Roxine Behrens, President
Tree Climbers, Inc
Clarksburg, MD

National Association for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children
St. Paul, MN

k. Dee Ignatin, Executive Director
Americans Against Abuses of Polygamy
San Antonio, TX

Wendy Murphy, JD
Womens' and Children's Advocacy Project
Center for Law and Social Responsibility
Boston, MA

Survivors for Justice
New York, NY

Steve Doell, President
Crime Victims United of Oregon
OR

Vivian Farmery, MSW, Founder and Director
JustTell
New York, NY

Matthias Conaty, Survivor-Advocate
Child Victims Voice
Wilmington, DE

Jeffrey R. Dion, Deputy Executive Director
National Center for Victims of Crime
Washington, D.C.

Rev. Anthony Evans, Leader
National Black Church Initiative
Washington, D.C.

Ken Hollowell, Vice President
MaleSurvivor

Robert M. Hoatson, Ph.D.
Road to Recovery, Inc.
Livingston, NJ

Sandi Capuano, Interim ED/COO
Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma (IVAT)
San Diego, CA

Kathleen McCreedy
Protecting Michigan's Children
Midland, MI

Bio:  **Professor Marci Hamilton** is one of the United States’ leading church/state legal scholars, as well as an expert on child sex abuse in religious and secular institutions. Professor Hamilton holds the Paul R. Verkuil Chair in Public Law at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University, and is the author of *God vs. the Gavel: Religion and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge University Press 2005), and *Justice Denied: What America Must Do to Protect Its Children* (Cambridge 2008, 2012). Professor Hamilton is a 1988 magna cum laude graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and served as Editor-in-Chief of the University of Pennsylvania Law Review. She clerked for Judge Edward R. Becker of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor of the United States Supreme Court.

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